



Kathryn Roszak's 92nd Street Y Residency Promotes Female Leadership in Dance

Dalia Rawson's New Ballet Studio Company performs at the 92nd Street Y residency. Photo by Daniel Garcia, courtesy of Dalia Rawson

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When her teenage daughter asked for advice on pursuing a dance career, Kathryn Roszak realized she couldn't give her encouragement, despite her own experience as a dancer, teacher and dancemaker. Earning a living as a dancer is a challenge, and when you look at potential leadership opportunities? It's a rare opportunity—especially as a woman—even if you danced with a prestigious company.

But Roszak is determined to change that. Last May, she held the first Women Ballet Choreographers Residency at the Djerassi Resident Artist Program in Woodside, California, to improve visibility and funding for women choreographers. Her next event is in New York City this month: "Moving Forward—Women Ballet Choreographers East and West," a one-day event for 92nd Street Y's Dig Dance series. Roszak pitched the concept and worked with Catherine Tharin, curator for the Fridays at Noon series, to bring West Coast choreographers.

"I'm hoping to develop greater visibility, and hopefully more support and opportunity, for women ballet choreographers," Roszak says. "Young female ballet dancers don't have many role models for becoming choreographers."

A short version of the full-length evening program takes place April 28 during the Fridays at Noon series, with excerpted new dances and revivals from Roszak, Gemma Bond (2014 fellowship grant recipient from The New York Choreographic Institute and American Ballet Theatre dancer), Lydia Johnson (artistic director of Lydia Johnson Dance), Cherylyn Lavagnino (NYU Tisch School of the Arts faculty and artistic director of Cherylyn Lavagnino Dance) and Dalia Rawson (director of the New Ballet School in San Jose). Wendy Oliver, author of *Dance and Gender: An Evidence-Based Approach*, leads a discussion about the unique place women ballet choreographers hold and their future in ballet. (Live-stream the event here: tischdanceandnewmedia.com/live.)

"Ballet is competitive and fiercely perfectionistic; a lot of young women don't think they have the time to study choreography. Or they think if they do take time away from their classical training, they may lose opportunities," Rawson says. "We need to encourage young female dancers to find a voice and allow them to experiment."

The full performance takes place at 8 pm, April 28, with pieces from Roszak and her company Danse Lumière, plus Bond, Johnson, Lavagnino and Rawson, who brings her full studio company.

For more: 92y.org/event/moving-forward